

## **SLOVAK REPUBLIC (Tier 2)**

The Government of the Slovak Republic, or Slovakia, does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so. The government demonstrated overall increasing efforts compared with the previous reporting period, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity; therefore Slovakia remained on Tier 2. These efforts included prosecuting and convicting more traffickers than the prior year. The government also operationalized 15 victim interview rooms across the country and approved an additional national action plan to implement GRETA's trafficking recommendations. However, the government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. Judges continued to issue lenient sentencing, resulting in 71 percent of convicted traffickers receiving fully suspended sentences in 2021, which undercut efforts to hold traffickers accountable, weakened deterrence, created potential security and safety concerns for victims, and was not equal to the seriousness of the crime. The government also decreased investigations and victim identification compared with the prior year. Gaps in victim identification continued, and the government did not adequately and proactively identify foreign national or Slovak trafficking victims within the country. The government also continued to lack legal safeguards to protect victims against potential penalization for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit. Furthermore, the government did not report adequately training prosecutors and judges on trafficking and did not report awarding restitution to any trafficking victims and rarely awarded compensation.

**PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:** Continue to vigorously investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers and sentence those convicted to significant prison terms. \* Continue to increase training for judges and prosecutors with a focus on a victim-centered, trauma-informed approach to law enforcement efforts and trial, as well as on the use of psychological coercion and fraud as means of trafficking. \* Continue to improve sentencing norms by sensitizing judges to the severity of trafficking crimes and the full range of penalties available. \* Improve efforts to proactively identify victims within the country, especially foreign nationals and Roma, and include training to government officials, particularly border police, labor inspectors, and municipal law enforcement, on proactive victim identification among vulnerable groups. \* Allow formal victim identification by and referral from entities other than the police, including civil society, social workers, and healthcare professionals. \* Improve the quality of human trafficking training courses available to prosecutors and judges. \* Increase awareness of and trafficking survivor access to damages and compensation and increase prosecutor's efforts to systematically request restitution for survivors during criminal trials. \* Ensure labor trafficking is investigated and prosecuted as a trafficking crime and not pursued as an administrative labor code violation. \* Increase migrant worker protections by increasing efforts to monitor labor recruitment companies, including prosecutions for fraudulent labor recruitment. \* Amend the law on the non-punishment of victims to ensure that trafficking victims are not inappropriately penalized for unlawful acts traffickers compel them to commit. \* Continue efforts to inform foreign worker groups of worker rights and responsibilities and victim assistance resources in their native languages. \* Streamline definitions and methodologies for gathering law enforcement and victim data. \* Update public awareness campaigns to portray human trafficking in a more realistic manner. \* Effectively implement formal written procedures for a victim referral mechanism that outline roles for all officials and stakeholders in order to improve

victims' access to and the quality of assistance. \* Improve the coordination of protection services to children. \* Explore utilization of the witness protection program for trafficking victims. \* Enforce the law prohibiting recruitment fees charged to workers and ensure any recruitment fees are paid by employers. \* Continue to pursue financial crime investigations in tandem with human trafficking cases. \* Ensure consistent early access to free legal aid.

## **PROSECUTION**

The government maintained law enforcement efforts. Section 179 of the criminal code criminalized sex trafficking and labor trafficking and prescribed penalties of four to 10 years' imprisonment. These penalties were sufficiently stringent and, with respect to sex trafficking, commensurate with those prescribed for other serious crimes, such as rape. In November 2021, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) submitted for Parliamentary review a draft amendment proposing an increase in penalties for human trafficking and criminalizing the knowing use of services from a trafficking victim; at the close of the reporting period, the amendment was not yet adopted.

Though some pandemic-related delays continued to occur throughout the reporting period, law enforcement efforts largely continued unencumbered. Government officials initiated investigations of 20 new cases in 2021, a decrease compared with 28 investigations in 2020; 24 investigations initiated in prior reporting periods remained ongoing. Of the 20 investigations, 10 cases were for sex trafficking, eight were for labor trafficking (two for domestic servitude and one for forced criminality), and two were combinations of multiple forms of trafficking. Prosecutors indicted 21 alleged traffickers in 2021, an increase compared with 14 in 2020, but less than the 38 indictments in 2019. Courts convicted 21 traffickers in 2021, a significant increase compared with nine in 2020 and 11 in 2019. However, the government did not adequately disaggregate data between sex and labor trafficking for prosecutions or convictions. Of the convicted traffickers, 14 were male, seven were female, and all were Slovak nationals. Of the 21 convictions, six traffickers (29 percent) received significant sentences of one year or longer imprisonment. However, 15 (71 percent) received fully suspended sentences and served no jail time. Three cases from prior reporting periods were upheld on appeal, but judges reduced the penalties in two. Lenient sentencing, specifically fully suspended sentences, remained a serious concern; over the past eight years, approximately 69 percent of all trafficking convictions resulted in fully suspended sentences or a fine. In March 2021, the Information Center (IC) within the Ministry of Interior (MOI) published an extensive and comprehensive report. The report included the analysis of previous sentences for traffickers from 2015 to 2020, with a specific emphasis on the use of section 39 of the criminal code, which permitted judges to reduce sentences below minimum sentencing thresholds. The report asserted that because judges applied section 39 to 77 percent of all trafficking cases, almost 70 percent of convicted traffickers received a sentence lower than the prescribed four-year minimum for conviction under Article 179; 64 percent of convicted traffickers received a suspended sentence; and even for those traffickers who received prison sentences, at least 10 traffickers (13 percent) were released from prison early. Lenient sentencing undercut efforts to hold traffickers accountable, weakened deterrence, created potential security and safety concerns – particularly for victims who cooperated with investigations and prosecutions – and was not equal to the seriousness of the crime. In comparison, of the 27 convicted rapists in 2021, 52 percent were sentenced to one year or longer imprisonment.

Corruption, inefficiency, and lack of accountability within the judicial branch remained concerns during the reporting period and may have hindered law enforcement efforts. The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in trafficking crimes. Civil society and a government-funded NGO, which served as the national victim-care service provider, continued to express concern that many prosecutors and judges assigned to trafficking cases were not adequately trained on victim-centered and trauma-informed approaches or on the specificities of trafficking crimes. Civil society noted that judges often failed to factor in how trauma could impact victim testimony. Experts noted that the inadequate quality and availability of anti-trafficking training courses offered to prosecutors and judges at the Judicial Academy may have contributed to their continued misunderstanding of the crime. While the government and government-funded NGOs continued to make efforts to institutionalize human trafficking training among law enforcement officials, despite the conclusions of the IC report, the participation of judges in these trainings remained low. Some prosecutors and judges continued to misunderstand non-violent, psychological coercion and fraud as means for the crime, had not used either in any recent trafficking cases, and continued to rely predominately on evidence of force and physical limitations on victims' liberty in trials. Experts asserted a lack of expertise and understanding of the severity of the crime, the limited use of corroborating evidence, and an overreliance on the testimonies of traumatized victims contributed to lenient sentences for convicted traffickers. Further, racial bias, particularly for cases involving victims from underserved Romani communities, may have contributed to more lenient sentences.

Police and prosecutors continued to cooperate on several ongoing international investigations with Europol, Eurojust, Frontex, the United Kingdom (UK), Germany, and the Netherlands and in 2021 reported the identification of an additional eight Slovak trafficking victims in the UK, asset forfeiture for a convicted trafficker, and the conviction of five Slovak traffickers in the UK as a result of this cooperation. In 2021, the government provided comprehensive anti-trafficking training – both in-person and virtually due to the pandemic – to a variety of civil society stakeholders and government officials; the training focused on improving the identification and assistance of trafficking victims, especially among the foreign national population, the Roma, and children, upholding victim rights, and outlining available assistance programs.

In September 2021, the government renamed the police anti-trafficking department of the Irregular Migration Unit within the Bureau of Border and Alien Police (BBAP) as the Coordination Department. Reportedly, the department still maintained responsibility for coordinating national anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts; however, experts highlighted concerns regarding prioritization of trafficking and the department's capacity for victim identification domestically as in past years. Although there was no dedicated trafficking unit within the prosecution service, cases were usually assigned to those with experience prosecuting trafficking, and prosecutors followed written guidance to provide victims with information on the prosecution process and resources available to them. Each of the eight regional prosecutorial offices had a human trafficking lead who could provide guidance and oversight on trafficking-related cases. Law enforcement officers and prosecutors reported coordination between them remained effective. However, prosecutors and some front-line officials continued to view possible cases of labor trafficking as administrative labor code violations and did not prosecute as trafficking crimes. The national police continued to cooperate with the police financial

intelligence unit to uncover suspicious transactions indicative of trafficking but did not report uncovering any trafficking cases as a result of the cooperation. While the MOI and police enhanced coordination and cooperation on gathering law enforcement and victim identification statistics, differences in how government and non-governmental actors gathered victim statistics continued to hinder effective comparison and monitoring of trafficking-related efforts.

## **PROTECTION**

The government maintained insufficient protection efforts. The government identified 34 victims in 2021 (compared with 50 in 2020 and 53 in 2019), and an additional eight victims (compared with 11 in 2020) were either self-identified or identified by the victim-care service provider – bringing the total to 42 victims, a decrease compared with 61 in 2020 and 66 in 2019. Of the victims identified, 23 were female (10 girls), and 19 were male (two boys). Of the victims identified by police, 15 were sex trafficking victims, two were victims of both sex and labor trafficking, and 17 were labor trafficking victims, including at least one forced begging victim, one forced criminality victim, and two domestic servitude victims. Of the victims identified, 32 were Slovak nationals, and two were Vietnamese nationals transiting Slovakia to Germany. Children comprised approximately 30 percent of the total victims identified. Officials attributed lower victim identification in 2021 to the pandemic and a shift to online platforms making victim identification more difficult, but they did not provide further details. Gaps in victim identification remained a concern: despite the large number of non-EU nationals present in Slovakia (approximately 111,500 in December 2021) and increased vulnerability to trafficking, no non-EU foreign nationals were identified as trafficking victims exploited in Slovakia, and 21 of 34 victims (62 percent) were identified abroad by other entities – a long-standing pattern in Slovakia. The government continued to utilize its national referral mechanism (NRM) for victim identification and referral. However, prior concerns remained unaddressed, including the continued lack of clear roles and tailored guidelines to improve victims' access to and quality of assistance for all front-line officials and stakeholders who were most likely to encounter trafficking victims – including, health care specialists, employees of foster homes, and counselors of offices of labor, social affairs, and family – though targeted training mitigated some concerns. Additionally, the NRM focused heavily on describing the potential trafficking situations of foreign nationals in Slovakia or Slovak nationals abroad, but it included little on trafficking situations Slovak nationals could experience within Slovakia. Law enforcement officials were the exclusive entities with authority to formally identify victims. However, experts have previously criticized the exclusive law enforcement authority to formally identify victims, asserting it created a potential conflict of priorities between law enforcement efforts and victim assistance.

In 2021, the government provided €208,274 (\$236,140) to an NGO that operated the national victim assistance program, voluntary repatriation, and national trafficking hotline, similar to €212,451 (\$240,870) allocated in 2020. The government-funded, NGO-run victim assistance program provided Slovak and foreign victims with shelter, financial support, repatriation to Slovakia, health care, psycho-social support, legal assistance, interpretation, and job training. However, the contract with the current service provider was scheduled to end in October 2022, and by the end of the reporting period, the government had not yet selected a service provider for the new contract. Of the 42 total victims identified, only 11 decided to enter the government-funded victim-care program in 2021, all of whom were Slovak nationals (compared with 12 of

61 in 2020, 17 of 66 in 2019, and 16 of 56 in 2018); the two potential foreign trafficking victims were not enrolled in the program but rather referred to German authorities. The program continued to assist an additional 12 victims enrolled from previous years. The victim-care service provider continued to note persistent concern that after deciding to leave the victim-care program, survivors remained in poor mental states and frequently ended up homeless. In its June 2020 Report, GRETA noted concern regarding the traditionally low participation in the victim-care program and urged the government to investigate further. The government reported foreign victims, including both EU nationals and third-country nationals, had access to the same scope and quality of victim care and support. All potential victims were eligible for at least 90 days of crisis care; victims enrolled in the assistance program were eligible for up to 180 days of care without having to participate in an investigation. However, victims who chose to cooperate with law enforcement were eligible to access victim care for the duration of the investigation and trial, which was often much longer than 180 days; all but one victim cooperated with police and prosecutors during the reporting period. Foreign victims, including trafficking victims, who had been granted temporary residency, were included under the general government-funded healthcare insurance scheme, which improved the provision of healthcare services to potential foreign trafficking victims who chose not to enroll in the victim-care program. The government did not have dedicated shelters for trafficking victims but rather accommodated victims in domestic violence shelters, with men and women housed separately, or in homeless shelters; experts urged the government to ensure specialized accommodations to address the unique needs of trafficking victims were available. There were limited accommodations for victims with families. Children were not usually assisted through the national victim-care program, rather authorities placed unaccompanied child trafficking victims in the care of child protective services in a government-run children's home or an NGO-run crisis home for children. However, if a child trafficking victim required additional services, it was possible to utilize trafficking-specific services through the national victim-care program. The government-run children's home was officially designated as responsible for child trafficking victims, among other child victims, and could accommodate up to eight victims. Referral of child victims to care was not systematic, and officials noted that coordination between these two victim-care regimes required improved streamlining.

Due to gaps in victim identification, trafficking victims may have remained unidentified in asylum-seeker and detention facilities for undocumented migrants. GRETA continued to express concerns related to the ability and willingness of labor inspectors and the Border and Alien Police to thoroughly screen undocumented migrant workers or asylum-seekers for trafficking indicators and refer them to assistance before deporting them. Asylum-seekers could be kept in detention for up to six months per Slovak law; the Center for Legal Aid visited detention centers during the reporting period, but the staff was not trained to identify human trafficking victims and did not report identifying any victims in 2021. A government-funded NGO, responsible for administering the victim-care program and monitoring asylum-seeker and detention facilities for undocumented migrants, reported its ability to visit facilities was limited due to the pandemic; it had not reported identifying any victims since at least 2018. In its June 2020 Report, GRETA urged the government to increase the quality of screening for trafficking victims by ensuring officials were adequately trained in victim identification at asylum-seeker and undocumented migrant detention facilities. It was unnecessary for the government to grant work permits, as foreign victims received subsidiary protection and could work legally, although NGOs noted

obstacles, including length of stay, sometimes precluded this. The law authorized permanent residency for foreign victims who would face hardship or retribution if returned to their country of origin; authorities issued no such residence permits during the reporting period. The government did not report granting asylum to any trafficking victim in 2021.

The pre-trial and trial process was lengthy and not always adapted, nor prosecutors or judges sufficiently trained, to avoid re-traumatization of victims. The 2017 crime victim's protection act provided psychological assistance to victims in pre-trial proceedings, banned direct cross-examination of victims, and allowed recorded testimony as official trial evidence, among other protections. However, civil society reported pre-recorded testimony was rarely used and, in at least one case in 2021, a judge specifically forbid it. To improve its victim-centered approach and decrease the possibility of re-traumatization, the government established 15 victim interview rooms across Slovakia for vulnerable victims, including trafficking victims, during the reporting period. Police received training on how to use the rooms and interview victims, record victim testimony for use in court, and it minimized the number of people in the room by allowing additional experts and officials to observe the interview from a separate room. The government reported using the interview rooms for 13 trafficking cases in 2022. Experts expressed concern that the law's limit of one victim interview may have hindered opportunities to build rapport with traumatized victims, who are unlikely to provide reliable testimony in a single interview session. Though not systematic, judges were generally willing to accommodate requests to provide a separate waiting area for victims and to remove the suspected trafficker from the courtroom during victim testimony. Furthermore, a 2020 guideline required investigators to invite the government-funded NGO administering the victim-care program to victim interviews, to ensure victims knew their rights regarding the victim-care program, free legal advice, and restitution. Witness protection programs existed, but the government has never utilized these programs for any trafficking victim; in its June 2020 report, GRETA continued to urge the government to utilize its witness protection programs for trafficking victims.

Restitution from criminal cases, compensation from the government, and damages from civil suits were all available to trafficking victims, but courts rarely ordered or awarded any of these. The March 2021 IC report found that between 2015 and 2020, the court awarded restitution or government compensation to victims in only six of 39 cases. The report stated that of 39 cases, the court did not mention the injured parties' claim for compensation at all in 19 cases (49 percent), and the court referred the injured parties to civil proceedings in 14 cases (36 percent). The IC report did not have the exact number of trafficking victims who had received damages through civil suits but concluded that it was reasonable to assume that the number was low. Prosecutors could file for restitution from traffickers in criminal cases; however, courts did not report if prosecutors filed such claims or awarded restitution to any victims in 2021. Civil society and the March 2021 IC report concluded prosecutors did not pursue a victim's right to restitution in an attempt to avoid prolonging proceedings; experts encouraged the government to pursue a more streamlined mechanism for victims to obtain restitution, while not impeding trial proceedings. The 2017 crime victim's protection act enabled the government to grant between €6,230 (\$7,060) and €31,150 (\$35,320) in compensation to victims from state funding, if filed within one year. The amendment to the 2017 crime victim's protection act, effective July 2021, simplified the process to receive compensation, enabling victims to claim compensation after the start of the criminal proceedings, as opposed to after completion; civil society welcomed this



change. The government provided compensation to one trafficking victim in 2021 after a request was filed by the victim-care provider on behalf of the victim. Additionally, victims could seek damages through civil suits, but it was unclear if victims filed any suits and, unlike prior years, no victims were awarded damages in 2021. NGOs continued to argue excessive legal costs and lengthy proceedings discouraged many victims from filing civil suits. The March 2021 IC report found the national victim-care provider was unaware of most cases in court proceedings, despite its responsibility to provide legal advice to trafficking victims. The report concluded that most trafficking victims had not received pre-trial legal counseling or been made aware of their rights, including for compensation and restitution; the report recommended increased access to free legal counseling as early as preparatory proceedings. In July 2021, an amendment went into effect to increase victims' access, including trafficking victims, to government compensation; however, though the government did not report if the law has been implemented. Under the 2017 crime victim's protection act, victims who opted to seek compensation from their traffickers through a civil suit could not also request restitution through criminal proceedings. Section 215(2) permitted, but did not require, prosecutors to drop criminal prosecutions against trafficking victims for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit. Slovak laws did not seem to require or permit district officials and police from dropping misdemeanors filed against trafficking victims for unlawful acts traffickers compelled them to commit.

## **PREVENTION**

The government maintained prevention efforts. The State Secretary of the MOI was the national coordinator for the fight against trafficking. The Expert Group within the MOI's Crime Prevention Department was led by the MOI State Secretary and functioned as the national anti-trafficking coordination committee; it met twice in 2021 and was responsible for coordinating policy documents, implementing and evaluating anti-trafficking programs with civil society, organizing trainings, and coordinating awareness-raising campaigns. The Expert Group comprised 29 members, including both government ministries and NGOs. The IC also contributed to national coordination by administering contracts for the victim-care program, gathering trafficking data, publishing an annual human trafficking report, and functioning as the national rapporteur. However, the IC continued to face challenges reconciling the data from different institutions, particularly data on prosecutions and convictions, and GRETA questioned whether the IC was sufficiently independent to critically monitor national efforts. The government continued to fund and implement its 2019-2023 anti-trafficking national action plan and in June 2021 approved an additional action plan to implement GRETA's recommendations from its 2020 report. The MOI maintained staff at 16 local and regional information centers throughout Slovakia who could offer information and assistance on all crimes, which included human trafficking; services included prevention, victim identification, and assistance such as psychological counseling and legal advice. In 2021, five trafficking victims were identified by the information centers (three men and two women) and referred to the police for formal identification and to other relevant agencies for services.

The government launched extensive trafficking prevention and public awareness campaigns to engage the public, though trafficking was sometimes portrayed in a sensationalized manner. The government published an article, continued to operate a website and mobile app in several languages, and continued to use media platforms, including social media, and physical materials, to raise awareness. The police and the MOI's Crime Prevention Department conducted a survey

and delivered at least 123 awareness-raising lectures, both in-person and virtually, for at least 22 schools. Police also delivered lectures for job-seekers, teachers, children in foster care, and an NGO. The government and government-funded NGOs specifically targeted vulnerable groups, like Romani women and children who were vulnerable to domestic servitude through forced marriage, for their awareness campaigns and continued coordination with the government office responsible for Romani communities. With funding from the Governments of Slovakia and the UK, an NGO launched an awareness campaign in 2021, which involved videos featuring social media influencers, a trafficking survivor, and a song by a popular Romani band.

The MOI reported distributing trafficking awareness leaflets, in Ukrainian, at its eastern border to refugees fleeing Russia's unjust war against Ukraine, working closely with specialized trafficking international organizations and stationing plainclothes officers at the border to search for trafficking indicators, issuing media broadcasts on trafficking risks, and including trafficking information on its website as a central information point for arriving refugees, available in eight languages. Authorities reported extended police hours to assist refugees and established formal protection measures, including the issuances of temporary protection status to approximately 58,300 refugees by the end of the reporting period, as well as offering financial reimbursement to citizens willing to accommodate refugees. The labor ministry continued to distribute a brochure to foreign workers on trafficking indicators, the labor code, and the rights and obligations of foreign employees in eight languages, and the MOI distributed informational brochures on trafficking and fraudulent employment offers. Concerns regarding foreign worker vulnerability to fraudulent labor recruitment and labor trafficking, as well as low victim identification within this population, remained significant. The 2004 law on employment services prohibited labor recruiters from charging a recruitment fee to workers, and employment agencies were required to register with the government. However, the government did not report law enforcement measures taken to enforce the prohibition of charging fees to workers or fraudulent labor recruitment. In its June 2020 report, GRETA urged the government to strengthen monitoring of recruitment and temporary work agencies. Experts and civil society continued to urge the government to increase efforts to inform foreign worker populations of their rights; lack of awareness of the availability of services, language barriers, and fear of immigration officials continued to prevent some foreign victims from seeking help from authorities. Foreign workers were able to change employment without requiring prior approval from the government, which may have decreased their vulnerability to trafficking.

In 2021, police reported conducting inspections for forced labor indicators of 55 businesses and 340 individuals, 274 of whom were foreign workers, but officials did not identify any trafficking victims. Separately, in 2021, labor inspectors conducted 16,918 inspections, which included 353 non-EU workers, but also did not report referring any potential trafficking victims to police, as they lacked the authority to identify victims. Civil society recommended increased victim identification training for labor inspectors to improve referrals to police. Despite the large foreign-worker population in Slovakia with an increased risk of trafficking, the government has not reported identifying any trafficking victims through joint inspections between law enforcement and labor inspectors for at least the last five years, continuing to raise concerns regarding the government's ability to identify trafficking victims, despite specific training. GRETA noted that joint inspections tended to focus on immigration enforcement rather than take a victim-centered approach and continued to recommend anti-trafficking training for all labor



inspectors, especially on victim identification and referral. Foreign trafficking victims without legal employment status may have been reluctant to discuss their trafficking situation with labor inspectors for fear of deportation, as it is regular practice for labor inspectors to contact the immigration officials if illegally employed foreign workers are identified. A government-funded anti-trafficking hotline, operated by an NGO, took calls for 12 hours a day in five languages, and identified four potential trafficking victims from calls in 2021. The government did not make efforts to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts.

**TRAFFICKING PROFILE:** As reported over the past five years, human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Slovakia, and traffickers exploit victims from Slovakia abroad. Traffickers exploit Slovak men and women in labor trafficking in agriculture, manufacturing, and construction in Western Europe, increasingly in German-speaking countries. Traffickers exploit Slovak women in sex trafficking in Austria, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, the UK, and other European countries. With the departure of the UK from the European Union, including new restrictions on freedom of movement, authorities have noted the UK is a less frequent destination for traffickers. Increasingly, traffickers exploit victims domestically within Slovakia, a recent development that was exacerbated by pandemic-related border closures. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees, predominantly women and children, fleeing Russia's war against Ukraine, have crossed the Slovak border seeking sanctuary and are vulnerable to trafficking. Irregular migration increased by nearly 50 percent since 2020; undocumented migrant workers are vulnerable to human trafficking. Some temporary workers from non-EU European countries, recruited for the manufacturing and construction industries, are subjected to conditions indicative of forced labor, including non-payment of wages or extended working hours. NGOs report men and women, mostly from the Balkans and South-East Asia, are vulnerable to forced labor in Slovakia and may be unable or afraid to seek assistance from authorities. Women from South-East Asia are vulnerable to sex trafficking and forced labor in domestic service, restaurants, massage parlors, or spas. Slovak women of Romani descent are particularly vulnerable to sex trafficking; traffickers transport them to the UK by force or deception in sham marriages for the purpose of sex trafficking or forced labor. Roma girls are vulnerable to forced traditional Romani marriages, which often includes the transfer of the girl into the care of her new "husband," where she is forced or coerced into domestic service. In some cases, parents of Slovak Roma children exploit their children in forced criminal activity in the UK. Traffickers force Slovak men, women, and children of Romani descent and Slovaks with disabilities and mental health conditions to beg throughout Western Europe. Traffickers exploit children without family or support structures who leave institutional care facilities in sex and labor trafficking.